THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS INC.

WINNIPEG CHAPTER NEWS

49 Years of Caring
1977 ~ 2026

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Please let us know if want to renew your newsletter. See last page.
NOTE Changes for Monday Sharing Meetings. See Pg. 19
Email mtanner@tcfwinnipeg.org or call/text 431-335-4018

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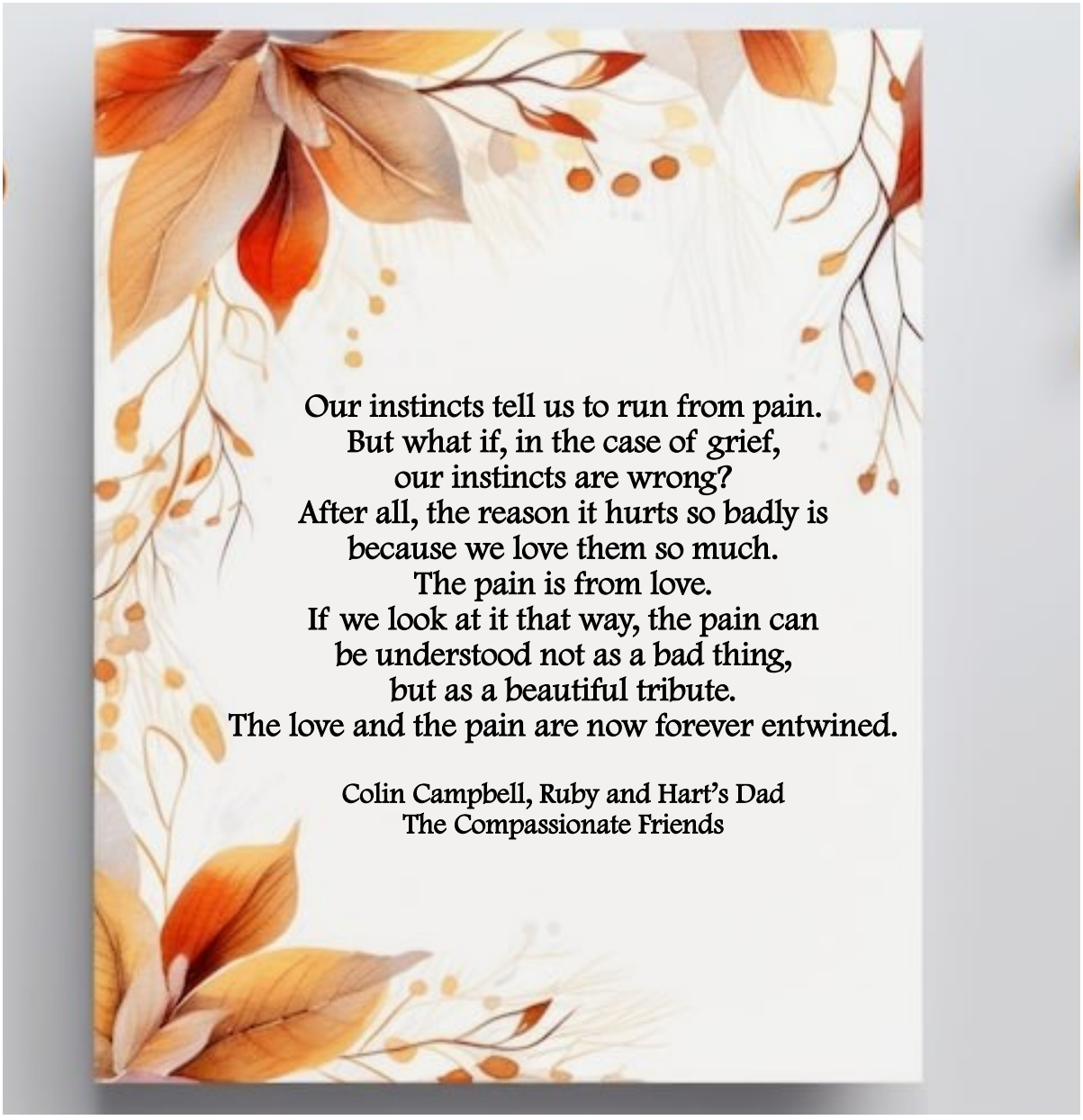
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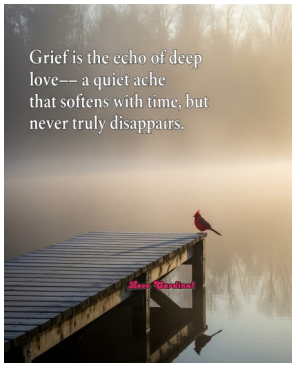
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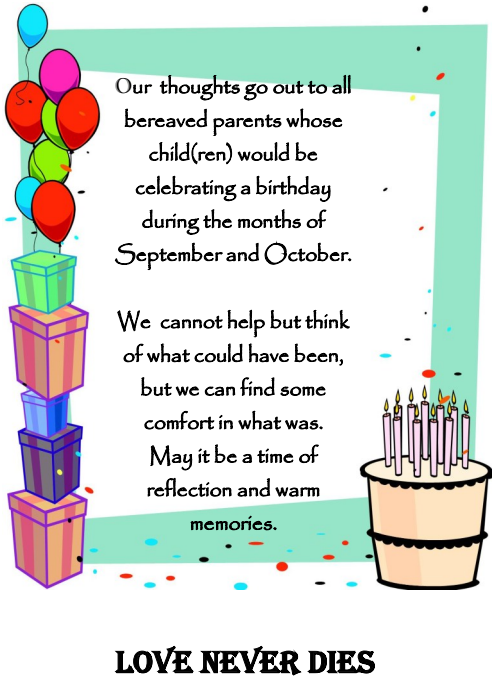


With heavy hearts we say farewell to Hedie Epp. Hedie died peacefully in her sleep on June 16, 2026. Since 1991 Hedie served as an Advisory Board Member for the Winnipeg Chapter of The Compassionate Friends and we are ever so grateful for all she did. Her career with the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner helped many of us struggling with the tragic circumstances of our child's death. After her retirement, she carried out workshops for the Winnipeg Police Association where she did workshops on death notification for the police recruits through her Beyond Grief Consulting Services. She will be missed. ♥









WORDS THAT HELPED ME…

At one of our TCF meetings a couple who regularly attend meetings mentioned something that had helped them. This has stayed with me and can be applied to many different life events. I hope this observation can help others.

Two parents can carry the same loss and yet walk through it in very different ways. Even though they are grieving the same child, their grief does not look or feel the same from one moment to the next. One may need to talk, to say their child's name often, to keep memories alive in conversation. The other may hold their grief more quietly, turning inward, carrying it in a more private space. Neither way is right or wrong—they are simply different expressions of love and loss.

A helpful way to understand this is to imagine that both parents are on the same train. The destination is shared—they are both traveling through the landscape of grief after the death of their child. But on any given day, they may be riding in different cars.

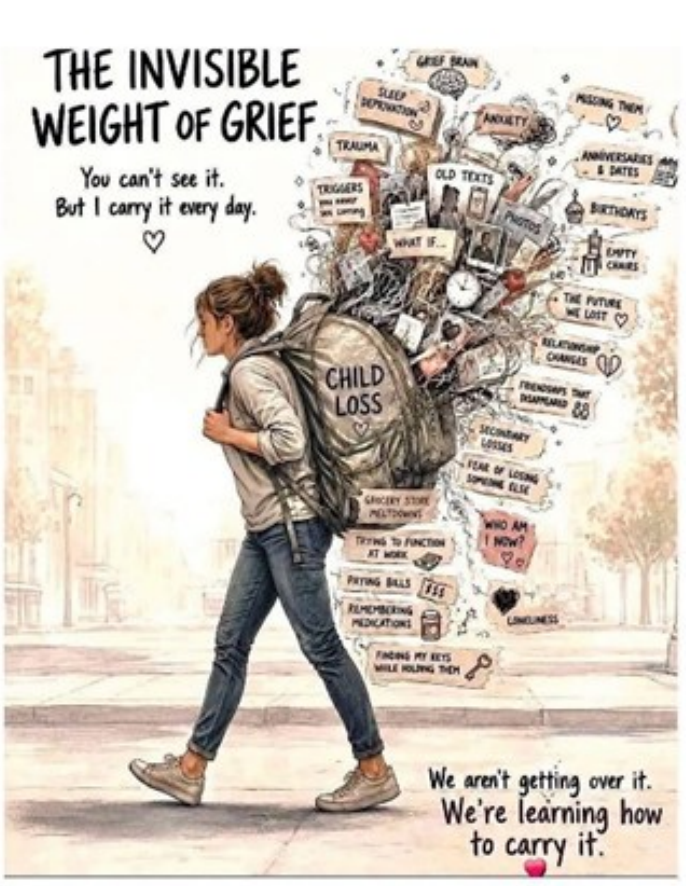
One day, they may sit together, looking out the same window, sharing memories and tears. The next, one may be in a car filled with reflection and silence, while the other is in a car where the need to speak and reach out feels stronger. Sometimes the train feels steady; other times it lurches unexpectedly, and each parent experiences that movement differently.

What matters is not that they grieve in the same way, but that they remain on the same train—connected by their love for their child and by a shared understanding that no one else can fully know. With patience, compassion, and space for each other's way of grieving, they can move forward together, even when they are not side by side.

Connie Schram
TCF CANADA VOICES

Carries The Weight

Carries the weight.
But who notices?
Carries the weight.
But does anybody really see it?
Every year we carry the weight.
Every year we learn how to shift
it from one shoulder to the other.
Not because it gets lighter.
Because we get stronger.
Or maybe we just get used to hurting.
To be honest, I've only been here since
February 24th, the day after I started
my third year without my son.
But I think I'm beginning to understand.
The weight never leaves.
You just learn how to carry it.
Some days it's an urn.
Some days it's a photograph.
Some days it's a lighter with a thumbprint.
A piece of jewelry made from ashes.
A tattoo with ashes in the ink.
Tiny things that somehow weigh a thousand pounds.
We hold onto them because we're terrified of letting go.
Because letting go feels too much like forgetting.
And forgetting is something none of us are willing to do.
So we carry the weight.
We replay the last conversations.
The last messages.
The last words.
I still listen to voice messages.
Still hear a voice I cannot answer.
Still find myself wanting to reply.
Knowing there will never be a response.
Carries the weight.
Every parent here knows exactly what that means.
And somehow we keep walking.
Because love does not disappear when someone dies.
It simply becomes weight we carry for the rest of our lives.
-Dan Nichols
TCF Winnipeg



LOVE GIFTS

LOVE GIFTS are tax-deductible donations of money, library books or equipment, given by parents, grandparents and others. These contributions are made to the Chapter in memory of a child, or as a memorial gift on the death of a friend or relative. We truly appreciate your love gifts as they allow us to offer resources (this newsletter, books, brochures, and special remembrance ceremonies) to assist bereaved parents and siblings. We are also able to provide information to "helping" professionals and others who impact the lives and feelings of the bereaved. We publish the names of all donors in our newsletter, unless otherwise requested. Thank you to the following people for their generous gifts.

Love Gifts

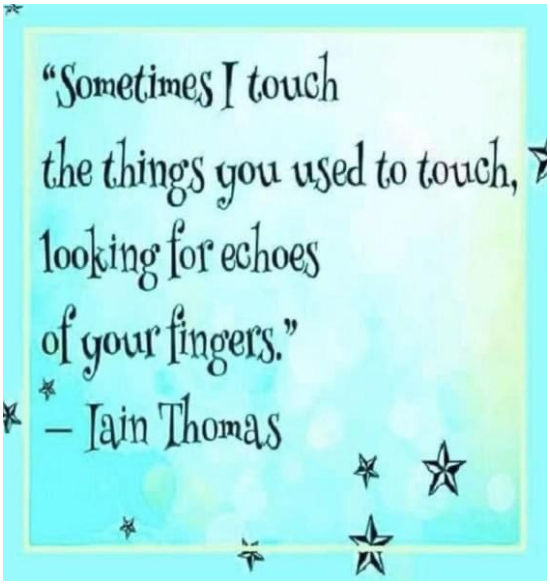
Our heartfelt thanks to parents, who donated in memory of their beloved sons, and husband,.

♥ ***MATTHEW, MICHAEL, BRIAN***

Memorial

♥ Northbridge General Insurance Corporation in memory of **WAYNE BUDGE** and **ANDREW BUDGE**
♥ 2 donations from Canada Helps





We Remember

The babies born sleeping
Those we carried but never held
Those we held but could not take home
Those who came home
but could not stay



October Is
Pregnancy & Infant Loss
Awareness Month

Donating just got a whole lot easier. **Please feel free to make your donations by etransfers through your financial institution to The Compassionate Friends, Winnipeg Chapter. Email Address: staylor@tcfwinnipeg.org**

MyGrief.ca: Work through grief or learn to support others.
KidsGrief.ca: Learn how to support grieving children and teens.

SHARING

It is our practice to "share" your comments with our readers as they often benefit others. Each of us handles our grief differently. So, we ask for your tolerance and understanding with compassion for the submissions presented. If you wish to submit a writing for Sharing in our next newsletter please mail or email it to our office by October 1st.

From Ingrid: Dear Compassionate Friends…Enclosed is a donation in loving memory of our dear son Matthew, wonderful brother to our dear daughter Tracey.

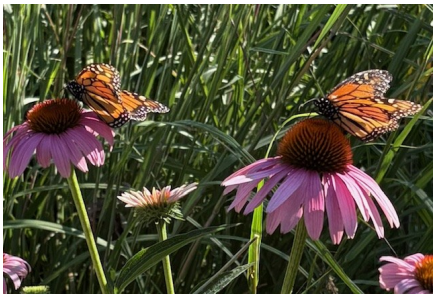
It is forever difficult to believe our son has been gone 14 years, September 6, 2012 he left our world. I live one day at a time, carrying on the best I can as I live with a very broken heart. Matthew is close in my heart forever…alive in the love, joy and memories he gave me. I ache to hug my son…it HURTS forever missing him.

THANK YOU CF for the hard work and loving support in this much needed organization. TCF has been a huge lifeline for me.

HUGS and loving thoughts to all who deal with the loss of a precious child.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF OUR DEAR SON, MATTHEW
LOVED DEARLY AND SO SADLY MISSED
December 18, 1984-September 6, 2012

I see you in the golden sunsets and the whisper of the wind in the trees.
My heart aches to have you back with me.
I gaze upon the moon and stars shining so bright.
Matthew, you are here with me day and night.
You are everywhere in all I see and do.
Your absence is the sky…I will forever remember you.
Wishing you were here by my side.
Living without you has been difficult…a painful emotional ride.
Life somehow marches on.
It forever is unbelievable that you are gone.
I see you and feel you when I see the butterflies and birds.
You are in my heart when I hear songs words.
Memories are the best things we ever had"
Words so true…treasures in my heart make me glad.
I miss you son…it hurts so much.
Hugs full of love I send you everyday.
I wish you were here bud…too sad you went away.
LOVE YOU SON



From Dianne:



Michael Victor
October 27, 1964-October 11, 2009
It has been seventeen very long years without you.
You are always with me in my heart and my mind.
Someone just has to mention your name and my tears still fall.
I know you are watching over your nephew and niece;
they are both doing very well.
Give your father a hug for me.
Thanks for being my guardian angel.
Til we meet again,
All My Love
Mom

LIVING A DOUBLE LIFE

I'm not a super hero who rescues damsels in distress.
I can barely save myself most days.
I'm not an international spy gliding suavely undercover, facile in multiple languages.
But I do speak two languages.
I speak the language of my parents and I speak "grief."
Grief is a complex language as it appears to be quite layered and constantly evolving.
It exhausts me trying to keep up.
The lessons keep coming daily since the loss of my son, Matthew. 💔
Grief, the unwelcome visitor, has filled my thoughts, but strangely my body had already begun telling the story.
The weight of rocks I carry daily, and the dysregulated nervous system.
I have no agency over my life at this time.
Grief roars
It yells
It shouts 📣
It stamps its feet
Grief is selfish
It DEMANDS my attention
Grief leaks out daily
It viscerally responds to stimuli in my environment.
I cannot predict what will send it into childish tantrums.
My entire body betrays me with these unpredictable assaults.
I try to speak "grief" to those who have not experienced loss but their faces show me they do not understand. 🤷‍♀️
I attempt to teach them with good intentions but it is
too difficult
for me
for them
to learn without lived experience.
I am a stranger in a strange land-speaking a new language that is completely foreign to my friends and family.
I scream
I beg
I plead
I coerce
I shout
Silence - no one replies
Quite by accident I found a "smiling mask" and I put it to my face and suddenly as if magically people understood me (again).
I removed it- silence
I replaced it- the noise of my old life played
Must I wear this to survive?
I wander in this double life carrying my mask, wearing it when necessary.
The weight of hiding my other life is draining me.
One day I walked into/ zoomed into a room filled with compassionate friends.
My body knew it was home before my mind understood why.
The pain of this loss will never become lighter.
I will become stronger at carrying it over time.
I will forever lead a double life that has divided into "the before" and "the after".
I will always speak "grief" and I will always need time to lay down my mask, take a break from this double life and to spend time with compassionate friends who can witness my grief-never turning from it.
This is a great gift they give me. 🙏 ❤️ 🎁

-Brenda McGoldrick
TCF Winnipeg & Waterloo

GRIEF & ANGER

AN EMPLOYMENT AGENCY NAMED GRIEF

Did you know that the minute your child died, you immediately joined the ranks of the employed? Never mind that you already had a job, or that your every moment was taken up by your role as wife/mother or husband/father, or that you had more than you could handle on a volunteer basis. You now have another job that carries with it no title of importance, but is important, nonetheless.

This new job involves the sad, but necessary task of creating a new life that does not include your dead child, and it is full-time employment for the next couple of years, if you are newly bereaved. It seems impossible in the beginning when your every waking moment is filled with thoughts of your old life with your child, but even the reliving of old memories is a start toward the rebuilding of your life. You can't move forward until you have revisited these old memories enough times.

Eventually, you learn by the process of experiencing all those special family times how it is you get on with the business of surviving without your child, how to start new traditions.

The job description for your new position calls for abilities that you may feel totally inadequate to qualify for at this time - things such as: An ability to be consumed by anger at any and everybody, and yet let go of it once you've dealt honestly with it; and ability to acknowledge feelings of guilt, and yet be able to eventually *forgive yourself because you did the best you could under the circumstances*; a capacity for inordinate amounts of patience with yourself and others around you as you make your way through pain filled days while maintaining some hope for better days ahead.

All of these are prerequisites to succeeding at your new job. By bravely reading out in the days and months ahead, you'll find that you are slowly learning how to build one day upon another until finally you realize you are maintaining a balance you once thought no longer possible. You'll look back and discover you're going on with your life and that you have, in fact, learned to create a new life that goes on without your dead child. You will note I did not say a better life - *just a new life.*

Then you'll find you need not continue full-time at your job. Maintaining the status quo of your new life will require some attention from you from time–to-time. That's when you become employed on a part-time basis. Look forward to that time.

Mary Cleckley
TCF/Atlanta, GA

WHO SPEAKS OF ANGER

There is a scene in the movie "Terms of Endearment" when the mother totally loses it. Ranting and raving, she flies up and down the nurses' station demanding another injection for her dying daughter's pain.

I am not sure what I thought my son's death would do to me, to my husband or my children. The horror of it remained unfinished for sure.

Death sows a sense of loss; loss of identity, loss of routine, loss of tenderness, loss of one thing we thought we would never lose - our children. So once the school bus left in the morning and our house became so very still, I was, as expected to be, engulfed by loss.

No high-tech equipment, no medicines to be carefully measured, or nursing schedules to be set up. Just tears and quiet - then the roaring, unexpected anger. It was the doctor's fault my son died. It had to be the doctor's fault. It was my fault. It was the cold, the spring winds that stole his breath away. It was the UPS man's fault, the milkman's fault, the school's - or it was the faith I imagined I didn't have. It had to be the lack of faith. It was my best friend's fault.

Anger took over and it allowed me to become mesmerized by how it might have been. Everyone and everything around me stole my son. Children laughed. My son couldn't laugh.

I hated to shop. Clerks sold Pampers. I cringed to see a young mother with a box of Pampers. In the distance, an ambulance could still be heard. Not for my son.

Who then speaks of anger? Who tells us how bloody hard it will be? Tell us that even those of us with the softest edges will rave like the mother in the movie. I stayed mad for what seemed like a very long time. God was often my primary target. I glared at the pulpit on Sundays, just as I glared at life during the week. So who spoke of anger?

My Compassionate Friends spoke of anger. They spoke of it often. In all stages, at all levels, in so many different tones.

I brought my anger to them, for they are my Compassionate Friends.

Sue Whalen
TCF/Lanesborough, MA

WHAT IF THERE WERE NO TCF?

If there were no TCF
There'd be no friendly face,
To greet me as I wander aimlessly
Through this maze
Of grief, melancholia and rage.

No one to spread the word
That while this is a life of pain --
Yes we can get through it,
And emerge as a new you and new me again.
There'd be no one to meet me each week or month
Or even to join me for lunch.

There'd be on one to mentor me and
Teach me that I can live again
In spite of the fact
That my child is gone forever.

There'd be no conference to meet or greet,
And tell the world we will survive.
And no way to get the words out that
Yes we are alive!

What if there were no TCF,
To wipe away our bitter tears,
And no one to lean on through the years.
There would be no one to light a candle with
And no one to listen who has gone through the grief.
There would be no one to ease my aching heart
Nor to walk with me through the dark.

If TCF had never happened,
I would not know how to hold my head high,
Nor appreciate the memories of her beautiful life.
If there were no TCF
There'd be no new friends who have all paid the price
Of loving and losing their beloved child's mortal life.

My beloved daughter, Kandy, died suddenly you know.
Five years ago seems like an eternity of missing her so.
In other ways it seems like a month ago.
Without TCF I'd have chosen to live a life of a hermit
Or even to die myself.
If TCF did not exist.

If there were no TCF
I'd never have been able to reinvest
By giving back to those who suffered the same fate.
My gratitude and thanks to you TCF.

~ Coralease Ruff
DC Chapter founder and leader, in loving memory of Candice M. Ruff on the fifth anniversary of the day she got her wings.

WHERE ARE YOU?

Where are you?
I search for your familiar face in every crowd.
Every group of teenage girls, finds me slowing, scanning, and hoping;
My heart refusing to believe what my head knows…
you won't be there.

And yet...I continue to search.
Hoping against hope, daring to dream
That I'll catch a glimpse of you again—alive, vibrant, throwing back your head as you laugh
Eyes sparkling, smiling, playful,
Loving life, living life, as only you could.

Where are you?
Are you really that quiet voice in my heart?
Those pictures I carry tucked in my "heart's eye"?
Everything I look at, every scene that unfolds,
Is overshadowed by this constant emotional slideshow
Playing non-stop; assaulting me over and over with pictures, memories, scents and sounds
That keep you alive — if only in my heart.

Where are you?
Are you the peace that washes over me,
As sleep rescues me once again from another day of living without you?
Are you the shoulder where I rest my head while I cry?
Are you the tears of others, falling as freely as my own as we talk and share memories of you?

Where are you?
Are you the peace that washes over me,
As sleep rescues me once again from another day of living without you?
Are you the kindness shown to me by strangers?
Are you the unexpected visits, when I feel like I'm all alone in this world?
Are you the yellow butterflies that flutter close by as I visit your grave?

Where are you?
You're everywhere, and you're right here, sweetheart.
Alive in my memories—as you'll always be,
Safe in my heart—where you've always been,
Resting your precious soul next to mine.

Always in my heart, Love Mom
Susan Diotte, Arnprior, ON, 04/09/01



A LITTLE WHITE CROSS

It was a little white cross by the side of the road, resplendent in floral offerings and bearing a beaded necklace on its cross piece. Standing there in mute testimony of a young life lost and a family's pain.

Leaving that ribbon of highway, to tread softly through the grass, we paused in silent reflection at that little white cross.

We stood there, surrounded by autumn's splendor, the beauty of gold and orange, blue skies, and craggy mountain peaks, already capped with snow; they were no colder than a family's grief.

Oh, young girl, beautiful Chris, your memory will not grow cold. Your cross still stands in all the seasons and beauty of your northern home, a reminder to all that life is precious, as you are, silently saying, "take care, take care."

Arleen Simmonds
TCF/Kamloops, BC

TIME ROLLS ON



Whether we see time going by or not, whether we are aware if it is winter or spring, May or June, day or night. . . time keeps rolling on.

I remember back in those early days of grief, when time seemed to stand still. I remember looking at the clock, realizing that it was 3:00am and being surprised that it was night time. I remember not knowing or caring whether it was a Sunday or a Tuesday. . .

But I did know when it was a Wednesday. I knew it was a Wednesday each week because Wednesday was the day our daughter died.

Everything from that moment on was measured by a different standard of time. At first we marked the hours, then the days, then the weeks. All time was measured by how long it had been since she had passed on from our world. Days became weeks, weeks became months, and now. . .months have become years. For us, the marking of time has evolved. Our family history will forever be divided into 'before. . .' and 'after. . .' but we have gradually become aware of time again. We keep a calendar, we make appointments, and we schedule ourselves into events and commitments.

Once again, time is rolling on.

Jane Ono
TCF/Coquitlam, BC

THE END OF SUMMER

The branches dance as the gentle wind
rustles through the leaves.
I listen for your name.
I do not hear it.

The birds chirp and sing, as they fly to the feeders.
I listen for the melody that echoes your voice.
It is not there.

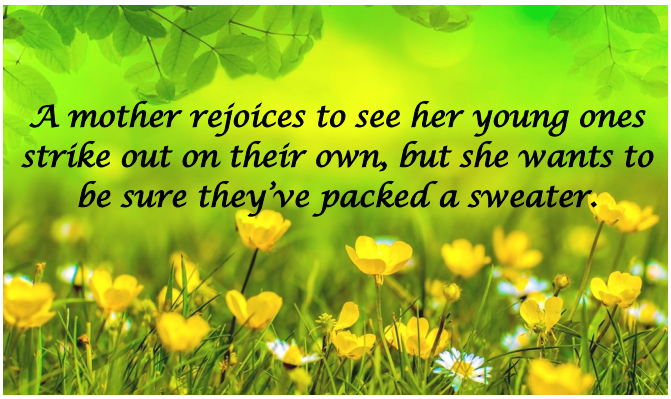
The fluffy clouds float across the sky creating ever changing pictures as they move.
I look for your name in the colors.
I do not see it.

I sit quietly observant in this sylvan place.
I hear you.
I see you.
I feel you here in my heart.

Carol Silverman
TCF/Abington, PA

We can't promise to fix all your problems, but we can promise you won't have to face them alone. . .

TCF/Central Iowa



"Our grief, though naturally difficult, is a source of energy within us. When we outwardly mourn, we unleash this amazing healing force."

~ Alan Wolfelt

PRAYER FOR MY DAUGHTER

Left-over
I stand at the door
Where she died,
Seeing eternity in this
Dim shed
Where I have let in the light.

O Heavenly light
honor the dead.
Enter this space
where she hung.
Bless the beam
warm the bricks
where her shoes swung.

Reach your healing power
into the secret places of sorrow,
the corners, shelves and cupboards
of despair,
touch the objects which were her
witness
and the ledge where, so neatly,
she left the key.
Reach deeper than my love,
which is mortal.

Immortal light
sweeten the foul air of death
and bathe her, herself so sweet
so mysterious
so brave in death
so cruelly served by life,
in her long-sought-for
original peace.

Rosemary Mokhtar,
Mother of Kartini Mokhtar, 11/10/72 - 2/16/96
Lovingly lifted from TCF/N. Nevada

FOR A PARENT ON THE DEATH OF A CHILD

No one knows the wonder
Your child awoke in you,
Your heart a perfect cradle,
To hold its presence.
Inside and outside became one
As new waves of love
Kept surprising your soul.

Now you sit bereft
Inside a nightmare,
Your eyes numbed
By the sight of a grave
No parent should ever see.

You will wear this absence
Like a secret locket,
Always wondering why
Such a new soul
Was taken home so soon.

Let the silent tears flow
And when your eyes clear
Perhaps you will glimpse
How your eternal child
Has become the unseen angel
Who parents your heart
And persuades the moon
To send new gifts ashore.

John O'Donohue Poet/Priest 1956-2008
TCF/Kamloops, BC

PLEASE DON'T JUDGE

To the world at large, please don't judge my precious child and those who have taken their own lives. How could you possibly know their pain, their struggles, their suffering and the suffering of those who loved them. To those who have lost beautiful children in these circumstances, please don't judge or feel bitterness towards those who have chosen to die. Their pain may well have been suffered much longer, and have been deeper than that of others. Can the searing pain of the heart and of the mind be compared with the suffering of all bereaved parents? Who knows the answers to the million "Whys" that are left behind? Let none of us judge.

Glenys Gow
TCF/Lismore

Tomorrow,
I'll try to understand her,
Try to understand the excitement behind
Those piercing black eyes.
Try to understand her zeal for life,
Tireless energy, and love for others.
Tomorrow,
I'll sit down beside her and get to know
This sister of mine.
I'll get to know the skinny little girl
I grew up with and shared a bedroom with
For all our teen years.
Tomorrow,
We'll share secrets together
We'll go for long walks,
We'll just sit together for hours and laugh.
Tomorrow,
I'll ask her about her boyfriends,
I'll ask her about her girlfriends,
I'll even ask what her favorite subject is in school.
Today?
I'm too busy,
I have too much to do,
She's getting on my nerves.
Today,
She's borrowing my precious clothes, ruining them.
Today,
She using up all the gas in my car.
Today,
She's asking stupid questions
I just don't feel like answering.
Today,
I'm too tired.
But tomorrow,
I'll tell her how much I love her,
I'll hug her and tell her she's pretty,
I'll tell her I'm glad I have a sister . . . tomorrow.
Tomorrow
Has finally come and she is gone.

written by Cindy, Kathi's sister
Taken from a book written by Kathi's mother called
"18, No Time to Waste."

TIME HEALS OUR GRIEF,
BUT THE NEED
TO HAVE OUR CHILD
REMEMBERED,
INTENSIFIES.

Leon Kennedy
TCF/Clarksville, TN

THE GRIEF THIEF

You're such a cold, insensitive thief.
How could you try to steal my grief?
You say to forget and look ahead.
I can't forget my brother's dead.
How can you act like nothing's changed?
When my heart has been so rearranged.
Even if you can't understand,
Couldn't you just extend a hand?
"Friend" is what I called you before,
But that was before you closed your door.
You don't want to see my tears or frown,
You can't be bothered or brought down.
You're so selfish and appear so cool,
Like nothing will harm you - what a fool!
You say, "if" I die instead of "when".
The way you think, it's such a sin.
You think your loved ones will live forever.
What a trick! You are really clever!
You assume they'll always be so near,
And that you've nothing ever to fear.
You can't imagine what I'm going through,
Because it hasn't happened to you.
Your eyes are vacant as you look at me.
My heart is broken, can't you see?
You really haven't got a clue,
Until, ex-friend, it happens to you.

Becky Schultz
TCF/Los Altos, CA

REST MY BROTHER

Rest, my brother, you now have peace.
The wars within you all have ceased.

And with the rising sun each day.
Upon the heaven you will play.

Until that day we meet again.
Know I love you, my brother, my friend.

Sandra Evans
TCF/Kearsage, NH



My Precious Grandchild



**I waited for that moment and it arrived one special day.
My first glimpse of you nearly took my breath away.**

**I was apprehensive about being called a grandma it's true,
until the first time I was called grandma by you.**

**Being a mother was a wondrous joy for me,
I gave it all I had with great responsibility.**

**Then I watched my child become a father of his own,
now I could be a grandma and explore the great unknown.**

**You brought so much joy when you entered this world;
you were grandma's pretty angel and daddy's little girl.**

**I loved to take you shopping, I loved to brush your hair,
in fact I loved taking you with me almost anywhere.**

**All those years of joy were filled with promise of much more,
how we could have known that sadness soon would be in store.**

**The ringing of the telephone, a knocking at the door,
in an instant all that mattered most didn't matter anymore.**

The hurt was great for me and for my child so wracked with pain, without my pretty angel life would never be the same.

**We gave each other comfort and we held each other tight,
somehow we have weathered the darkest of the night.**

**Today we still cry and we always ache for you,
but we also take some time remembering that you lived too.**

**Your smile forever sparkles and your laugh will always be,
because my precious grandchild you are still a part of me.**

**Connie Sheets
We Need Not Walk Alone 2014**

Welcome Newcomer

Beneath the laughter and the smiles
Echoes the pain and anguish of children gone.
Don't be misled by the superficial joy.
Our normal appearance belies our eternal grief.

We rush to meetings to share details of death.
In better days we would have changed the channel
To avoid these stories of horror.

Priorities change.
Newcomers enter, confused and angry.
They wonder whether these laughing parents
Have truly lost their minds.
(They do not yet realize we do this so as NOT to lose our minds…)

Balloons of all colours decorate the room.
"Are we at a birthday party?"
Many are busy writing messages with their hearts.
Soon they will rise to the heavens, symbolically touching our precious loves.

We know well this anger and confusion.
We remember believing we would never laugh again--
Now, with newfound wisdom, we know it is possible and necessary
To be able to laugh and cry through tears of grief.

— Moe Bares, TCF/Babylon, NY

I Can Only Give You Flowers

*There was a time when I shopped
for socks and shirts and books and toys,
things in general liked by boys
(like things bizarre for your guitar).*

*Now I make the rounds
of flower shops
(sometimes without making sounds)
searching for the seasonal arrangement that bests
adorns your tomb —
doesn't that sound like gloom?*



*You left too soon. My Son.
You cheated me —*

*You robbed me of the fun
and the opportunities and the pleasures
of buying your children treasures
of socks and shirts and books and toys —
and other things so loved by boys.*

*Fay Harden
TCF/Tuscaloosa, AL*

Little Angels

LUKE

Where to begin,
How to ever express all the feelings-

I look out the window and see
Life going on as usual -
Don't they know the sadness that
Abounds in this tiny hospital room?

A lifetime of feelings
That needed to be expressed
In such a short time

Minutes, maybe an hour.

To somehow give him
All the love he needed, deserved and
to try somehow, some way to convey
Why?
To hope he knows, to hope he understands



I love him.

Written by Luke's mother
On the day of his birth/death

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF SOUTHWESTERN

SOMEBODY

Somebody said, "It was all for the best."
That somebody was probably wrong.
Somebody said, "It was meant to be."
Different verse, same miserable song.
Somebody said, "You can have another,"
As if that would make it all right.
Somebody said, "It wasn't a real child."
Somebody's not very bright.
Somebody thinks it is helpful to say
When grieving should come to an end.
Somebody showed their true colors.
That "somebody" isn't a friend.
But somebody said, "I'm sorry,"
And sat quietly by my side.
And somebody shared my sorrow,
And held my hand when I cried.
And somebody always listened,
And called my lost baby by name.
And somebody understood, that I'll
Never be the same.

Submitted in memory of
Jacob Edher, born still on 7/20/06
And in honor of his mother Sari,
For her work in passing the MISSing Angels Bill in California

Together we shall join hearts and hands across the earth and decorate the world with hope and healing and remembered laughter.

We shall remain forever linked through the love of our absent children, parents, husbands and wives, siblings, grandparents, friends - all of our loved ones who dance across the rainbows ahead of us.

We are a family circle - broken by death, mended by love.

May this day, and every day, be days for us to laugh and sing, dance and learn and dream. May this day, and every day, be days of celebration and the chance to give one more hug, to say once more 'I love you'.

May love be what you remember most!

Darcie Sims

When grieving friends meet



We are here together
in the radiance
of our memories
and in the darkness of our loss.

The memories of days gone by
can be like northern lights,
outshining distance and night,
rising in wonder.

And sometimes
the radiance of our memories
overcomes
the darkness of our loss.

Sascha

Making Progress

The day you died, my spirit sought
To turn away from life;
It could not face the pain
That pierced its being like a knife.

I wanted to go with you
Why should my life go on?
I found no earthly reason
To arise and greet the dawn.

I could not find a purpose,
How pointless it all seemed;
Reality seemed distant,
Was my life a bitter dream?

I seemed to be suspended
In a tiny piece of time;
Simply going through the motions
Like an actor or a mime.

Then, bit by bit, as I endured
Each never-ending day,
I learned to smile and laugh again
In a tenuous kind of way.

And now, although I miss you more
Than any words could tell,
No longer am I mired in
A brutal, needless hell.

I know I cannot escape
My sadness and my pain
But I need not give it power
To dominate again.

Once again I notice rainbows,
The stars adrift in space,
A flower's perfumed beauty,
And the sunshine on my face.

I need not search so desperately
To find some subtle meaning,
Some purpose in the hours enclosed
Between daybreak and evening.

I find delight recaptured
In hearing, touching, seeing;
Once more I've come to know
The peaceful joy of being.

~ Peggy Kociscin Albuquerque, NM

REMEMBER ME

To my aunts and my uncles
To my parents' best friends
Have you forgotten me
Just because my life had to end?

Don't you realize the pain
That my parents live with each day
The sadness and the hurt
That never goes away

Why do you exclude me
And pretend I don't exist
It could have been your child
Whose name was on the list

I am here, so remember me
The way you did when I was on earth
Just because I'm an angel now
My parents know my worth

Just because I can't be there
With you on Holidays
I'm still my parents' child
I had no choice when I went away

Think about my parents
And the life they've had to live
Don't you think they'd bring me back
If life for me they could give

You never say my name out loud
And that hurts my parents so
For I am still their child
They didn't want me to go

Think about my parents
And the life they've had to live
The only wish they have
Is to have me back again

Please don't forget me
For I once did live
My parents only have my memories
For the life I once lived

A child in heaven

Sharon Bryant



But For Now

I once again find myself sitting in darkness.
There is no reason to have lights on.
Children will be coming to my front door.
But for now, they'll think I'm gone.

Again, it's time for Halloween season to begin.
Children dressed in costumes and attire.
I want to see their smiles and hear the laughter ...
Oh but for now, it still sets my heart afire.

I haven't always been the way I am tonight.
I once had a child that did the same.
I would decorate the house and yard with goblins.
Oh my child loved to share the game.

Then, one day my child went away to Heaven;
Oh, I was left in pain wondering why.
I pray everyday to somehow find my way.
But for now, I do nothing but sit and cry.

Then, I will have to face other holidays.
Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year.
Only a Mom who has walked this pathway
truly understands this dreadful fear.

For I once cooked a full course meal.
I could have fed an army here.
Smells of the holiday season filled the air.
And, family came from everywhere.

Then, there was the Christmas Season.
Oh the days were filled with fun.
I once enjoyed the days shopping for gifts.
But for now, I just want to run.

I want to be happy for others at this time.
But I have yet to learn the plan.
I truly want to share the holiday season ...
But for now, I don't think I can ...
And ... I know you understand.

~Kaye Des'Ormeaux~
Dedicated to each Mom who has lost a child.
Written 10/22/02

It seemed they needed to quantify my grief before determining if they would grant me sympathy.

What Would He Tell Me…about His First Day of School

Ok. I didn't think it was going to bother me this much. I've been saying for weeks that I couldn't wait till school started to get Scott and Ashley out of my hair. (They couldn't wait to get me out of theirs, either!)

So here it is, the eve of the first day of school, and I'm thinking. "What would tomorrow be like if Nicholas were here?" His turn finally comes to stand outside with backpack and new shoes, waiting for the big yellow school bus. Or would he have been the only one of the three who wanted Mom to take him to his first day of kindergarten? What would he come home and tell me about his first day of school?

And what about the kids— his class? Will I forever look at these kids (and their parents) and wonder "what if?" They don't even know that they're missing a classmate.

Here it's been almost six years and I feel compelled to hang around the school and grab every kindergarten parent I see and say "I would have had a child in this class." I surprised my self because I don't usually have those urges anymore. But this is harder than I thought it would be. Another milestone of life-the first day of school—that Nicholas (and I) missed.

The thing is nobody will think of this. It's not a birthday or Mother's Day or Christmas. It goes by unnoticed except by a mother with kids too excited to sleep tonight - one starting 5th grade, one starting 2nd, and one….

Linda Moffatt, TCF/St. Louis, MO

OCTOBER MEMORIES

October's here, the air is bright.
The leaves decked out in fancy dress.
The clouds in shapes of animals,
Hang in the sky so blue.
This was our time of year,
Your favourite
How many times did you come in,
Cheeks glowing, eyes sparkling,
Smelling of the leaves you jumped through
As a child and even after you grew up.
How many times did you say
"Just smell, just feel the air, I love it,
Crisp, with a hint of winter coming."
Our time, but now only my time.
Time to dream dreams that won't be
Time to wish wishes that can't come true.
Time to remember and treasure each day
We had together.
Time for October's memories.

Arden Lansing,
TCF/Northfield. NJ

Changing Through Grief

When our children, siblings, or grandchildren die, it is hard to imagine that we might ever find something positive from our experience of loss. Over time, however, we may identify new parts of ourselves that have emerged from our painful journey of living with deep grief. This is not to suggest that we would choose loss so that we can grow. Yet, what develops in us along the way may be surprising.

When I attended my first local Compassionate Friends chapter meeting, I was shocked by the reality of all these other bereaved parents surrounding me who also had terrible experiences of loss. At first, it was painful listening to story after story, each of which was overwhelming, tragic, and not fair. As I continued attending and found a place of comfort with those who understood, my compassion and empathy expanded. While I always cared deeply for other people, I felt like I had even more heart space available for the sorrows, strides, and joys of others. Many who have lost a child, grandchild, brother, or sister find they have a greater capacity for compassion and understanding of others. This is often the way that grief works and shapes us without us noticing the incremental day-to-day molding.

A greater capacity to love, appreciate, and accept things in others is a frequent experience for bereaved people. Shared sorrow and shared support through grief have helped me live more deeply and presently. I spend my time focusing on more important aspects of living because I know there isn't time to be wasted on surface and superficial things. Living from a place of conscious choice to make the most of each day is now a way of being for me rather than a daily mindfulness task.

The Autumn Edition of *We Need Not Walk Alone* includes a variety of writings describing the unique ways in which Compassionate Friends members have, often unexpectedly, changed. Their stories express new insights and what has grown and evolved in them along their journeys. We hope these articles help you identify the unique changes you have undergone and appreciate the many experiences that each of us brings from our pain of loss.

Warmly,

Shari O'Loughlin, MBA, CPC
CEO The Compassionate Friends

We Need Not Walk Alone

How does the change of seasons affect your grief, and what helps you cope?

I find the answer is yes. The transition of any season can be a difficult time for those of us whose child, sibling or grandchild is no longer here.

I have found Autumn to be a time to reflect on our precious memories with our loved ones. By doing so it provides me with Strength, Hope, Thankfulness and Gratefulness. Seasons change but our love and memories never will.

Debbie Fluhr, Avery Asa's Grandmother

We Need Not Walk Alone

How does the change of seasons affect your grief, and what helps you cope?

Winter is a gloomy season for me. The trees are bare, flowers have died, and it's cold. I'm also reminded that we are about to start all over, with birthdays, anniversaries, and the holidays all over again. This season usually makes me more depressed, however, what helps me cope is reminding myself that I didn't give up, and that my children would never want us to give up. They would want us to continue.

Dawn Tufte, Alex, Melody, and Spencer's Mom

We Need Not Walk Alone



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

WE HAVE MOVED!!

Our location is at 230-530 Century St. Please make sure you call/text or email before you come in case we are not in the office.

♥ **MONDAY AFTERNOON IN PERSON SHARING MEETINGS**– Monday Afternoons from 1:00 – 3:00 pm
PLEASE NOTE DATES FOR AFTERNOON SHARING MEETINGS:
September 14th
October 5th, 19th
November 2nd, November 16th, November 30th
NOTE: There will **NOT** be an In Person Sharing Meeting on Monday September 28th.
PLEASE NOTE: RSVP REQUIRED Email mtanner@tcfwinnipeg.org or call/text 431-335-4018

♥ **TCF IN PERSON EVENING SHARING MEETINGS**
♥ **NOTE: RSVP REQUIRED** by noon on sharing date please.
RSVP to mtanner@tcfwinnipeg.org or call/text 431-335-4018
Our in person sharing meetings are held on the 3rd Thursday of each month. Next In Person Sharing Meetings are September 17, October 15, November 19 at 7:00pm. **NOTE: Change of time to 7:00PM**
For information please email mtanner@tcfwinnipeg.org or phone/text 431-335-4018

ALL IN PERSON SHARING MEETINGS REQUIRE AN RSVP

♥**TCF Zoom Sharing Meetings**
Tuesday afternoons 1:00-3:00pm
On the 3rd Wednesday of each month, there will be a Sharing Meeting on Zoom at 6:30pm Central time. The next evening sharing meetings are September 16, October 21, November 18, December 16.
To Join Any of the Zoom Meetings, please email mtanner@tcfwinnipeg.org

Palliative Manitoba Grief Seminars-See their website for information or email info@palliativemanitoba.ca or call 204-889-8525.

(MOVA) Sharing Meetings-Manitoba Organization for Victim Assistance for those that have had a loved one murdered. Please email help@mova.ca or contact Karen Wiebe, Executive Director at 204-831-8950. MOVA In Person sharing meetings are held on the 1st Monday evening of each month. Zoom sharing meetings are also offered.

November 27 - TCF Annual Candlelight Gathering-details in November/December Newsletter
Please Join Us



Moms Stop the Harm is an organization that offers support to anyone who has had a loved one die from a substance disorder. MSTH has a peer led, phone support line that is open Thursdays & Fridays from 5:00-11:00pm central time.

HELP OUR CHAPTER
GO PAPERLESS BY RECEIVING YOUR NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL
Let us know by email to mtanner@tcfwinnipeg.org

Donating just got a whole lot easier. **Please feel free to make your donations by etransfers through your financial institution to The Compassionate Friends, Winnipeg Chapter. Email Address: staylor@tcfwinnipeg.org**

MyGrief.ca: Work through grief or learn to support others.
KidsGrief.ca: Learn how to support grieving children and teens.

Telephone messages and emails are checked daily.

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS is an international, non-profit, peer support organization offering **FRIENDSHIP, UNDERSTANDING, GRIEF EDUCATION and HOPE FOR THE FUTURE** to all families who are grieving the death of a child at any age from any cause including miscarriage, stillbirth, infant and adult. We are not counselors or therapists. We are people who have journeyed (in varying degrees) the same road you are now traveling.

OUR PURPOSE is to aid in the positive reconciliation of grief and foster the physical and emotional health of bereaved parents and their surviving children.

THERE ARE NO DUES OR MEMBERSHIP FEES. All contributions are voluntary, and tax-deductible receipts will be issued. Winnipeg Chapter Tax-Exempt #11922 8138 RR0001.

Sometimes .....

the anguish of my child's death
ss an echo
of my heart beat.

at other times
the longing for my child
tears at my soul.

Always
the love for my child
is a river flowing,
pushing me ever onwards—through life.

- *Judith Vasas*
- *TCF Winnipeg*



TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE IT